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ORIGIN AF-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-01 /005 R

66011

DRAFTED BY AF/I:LPSLEZAK:IRT

APPROVED BY AF/I:DAZACHARY

AF/EX:EGKRYZA

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R 081531Z APR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

XMT AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

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FOL REPEAT FREETOWN 0998 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA

PARIS TRIPOLI TUNIS CASABLANCA GENEVA USUN APR 05

QTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FREETOWN 0998

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: ELAB PORG PFOR OAU SL XA

SUBJECT: 14TH AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

REF: A. FREETOWN 983; B. FREETOWN 958; C. FREETOWN 957

SUMMARY: 14TH AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE CLOSED
FREETOWN APRIL 3RD. LKAIPBOC#WAS MARKED BY GENERALLY
TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS, WITH FEW POLITICAL FIREWORKS,
LARGELY DUE TO THE ASTUTE CHAIARMSHIP OF SL MINLAB GUBIO-IAMIN.
NORTH AFRICA ISSUES PROVIDED BIT OF EXCITEMENT AS ALGERIANS
FAILED IN EFFORT SEAT POLISARIO DELEGATION AS OBSERVERS, AND TUNISIAN

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LIBYAN DIFFERENCES SMOLDERED IN THE CORRIDORS. ALTHOUGH US
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LETTER OF INTENT WITHDRAW ILO WAS MENTIONED TWICE IN

PLENARY, AND ILO OFFICIALS DISCUSSED MATTER EXTENSIVELY WITH EMBOFFS (SEPTEL), THERE WAS NO CORRIDOR DISCUSSION OF ISSUE AMONG AFRICANS. BOTH GOSL AND VISITING DELEGATIONS WERE PLEASED WITH THIS, SIERRA LEONE'S FIRST MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE 14TH AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE CLOSED IN FREETOWN APRIL 3. ASTUTE CHAIRMANSHIP OF SIERRA LEONE'S MINISTER OF LABOR GEORGE GUBIO-LAMIN, WHO COMBINED A KEEN SENSE OF HUMOR WITH GENEROUS APPLICATION OF WHISKEY IN CLOAKROOMS, MANAGED TO KEEP CONFERENCE GENERALLY TECHNICAL. WELL-MANNED AND FINANCED LIBYAN AND ALGERIAN DELEGATIONS REPORTEDLY TRIED TO HAVE POLISARIO DELEGATION SEATED AS OBSERVERS. MODERATES MANAGED KEEP ISSUE OUTSIDE PLENARY. TUNISIAN-LIBYAN BITTERNESS (REF A) SURFACED IN DISCUSSION VENUE DURING CONFERENCE, AND DURING APPROVAL TUNISIAN MINSOCIAL WELFARE ENNACEUR'S CANDIDACY FOR CHAIRMANSHIP UPCOMING GENEVA WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE. EGYPT ATTEMPTED UNSSUCCESSFULLY TO INTRODUCE RESOLUTION ON LABOR IN ISRAELI ADMINISTERED ZONES STEMMING FROM ALEXANDRIA ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION MEETING. TRIPOLI REMAINS VENUE FOR OAUU MEETING, AND ENNACEUR'S CANDIDACY WAS APPROVED.

2. AMONG TECHNICAL ISSUES DISCUSSED WERE: PROPOSAL TO CONVERT CONFERENCE INTO AN AFRICAN LABOR ORGANIZATION (PUSHED BY NORTH AFRICANS, WHO FORESAW TIES TO THE ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION) WHICH WAS REJECTED IN FAVOR OF CONFERENCE BECOMING A SPECIALIZED ORGAN OF UAU; REPORTS ON TURNING LABOR CENTER AND AFRICAN DESIRES FOR MODIFICATION OF ILO POLICIES (BEING POUCED DEPT); REPORT OF OAUU SECGEN AKUMU; AND BRIEF REOPENING DEBATE OVER STRUCTURE STEERING COMMITTEE OF WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE (REF B). AKUMU MADE ONE NOTABLE GAFFE BY DEPARTING FROM SPEECH TEXT TO QUOTE THANK THE LIBYANS FOR GIVING US DOLS 50,000 TO USE IN THE LAST ILO ELECTIONS IN GENEVA UNQUOTE. SEVERAL INCREDULOUS DELEGATES CONFIRMED EMBOFF'S HEARING, AND AKUMU WAS LATER REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN SEEN PLEADING WITH SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS TO HAVE HIS WORDS STRUCK FROM THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECORD. EGYPTIANS, LIBYANS, AND ALGERIANS ATTEMPTED TABLE A RESOLUTION AGAINST THE ILO'S PLANNED STRUCTURE FOR THE WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE STEERING COMMITTEE (REF B). FANCY FOOTWORK BY ILO ASSISTANT DG BERTIL BOLIN, BACKED BY FAVORABLE RULINGS BY GIBIO-LAMIN, KEPT THE LID ON, BUT ISSUE IS SURE TO ARISE AT TUNIS WEC PREPARATORY CONFERENCE SET FOR EARLY MAY.

3. DESPITE ILO DG BLANCHARD'S ASSURANCES (REF C), AND HIS MENTION IN OPENING SPEECH OF US LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW FROM ILO, ISSUE DID NOT SURFACE IN PLENARY EXCEPT FOR BRIEF MENTION IN LIBERIAN DEPUTY LABOR MINISTER ETHELBERT COOPER'S REPORT FOR AFRICAN GROUP IN ILO GOVERNING BODY, WHICH LED TO NO DISCUSSION, ALTHOUGH NUMEROUS ILO OFFICIALS, INCLUDING BLANCHARD, BOLIN, BENTUM, AND ADOSSAMA SOUGHT OUT EMBOFFS FOR DISCUSSION US-ILO RELATIONS, INCLUDING ADVICE ON POSSIBLE AFRICAN VISIT BY AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN (SEPTEL), THERE WAS NO RPT NO APPARENT DISCUSSION OF ISSUE BY AFRICANS AMONG THEMSELVES.

4. GOSL SEEMED PLEASED WITH CONFERENCE AS DID NEARLY ALL DELEGATES, GOBIO-LMAIN ANNOUNCEMENT MORNING APRIL 2 THAT GOSL WOULD FOOT HOTEL BILLS OF ALL DELEGATION MEMBERS COMPENSATED FOR OCCASIONAL GRUMBLING AT MALFUNCTIONING AIR CONDITIONERS. SUCCESS OF CONFERENCE WAS EVEN MORE STRIKING TO THOSE WHO HAVE OBSERVED ITS PREPARATION OVER LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. AIRGRAM WITH CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS FOLLOWS FROM DAKAR.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE084785
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LPSLEZAK:IRT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760134-0644
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760482/aaaacrrv.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 FREETOWN 983, 76 FREETOWN 958, 76 FREETOWN 957
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 14TH AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE
TAGS: ELAB, PORG, PFOR, SL, XA, OAU
To: AF POSTS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006